

Remarks of ICS Group Chairman Mark W. Grobmyer  
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It is a Great Honor and Privilege to have been requested to participate in this most distinguished gathering of world economic development leaders.

Today is the most exciting time in world history to be addressing these important issues. While world leaders have debated for years how they could bring economic development benefits and government services to the masses, for the first time they are actually able to do something about it on a very large scale. This is thanks to amazing developments in the technology of communications and electrical power.

Hence the leaders of the world's most economically advanced countries made a key policy decision at the year 2000 G-8 meeting. They said it must be a priority of the global economic powers (and the developing world as well) to "bridge the digital divide". Thus they proclaimed that technology should be utilized to bring communications and the electrical power to utilized communications to those not served or those who are under served in the communities of the world.

As a result of this call to action the government of Japan pledged special programs to assist in achieving this goal, which will result in several billion dollars being made available for a wide variety of programs to be developed. President Clinton of the United States echoed the call to action and challenged technology companies in the private sector to become creative to present a private sector set of solutions.

Later in the year, a much larger group of nations embraced the same policies at the APEC 2000 meeting hosted by Brunei. The Sultan of Brunei's remarks -as well as the official APEC Declaration agreed to by more than 20 world leaders present-called for more government and private sector initiatives to bring services, through technology, to those in need of assistance in bridging the digital divide.

The practical effect of such policy directives means that two very important leadership changes will be made.

First, governments will be searching for ways to modify their regulations to make it more attractive for the private sector to invest in power and communications units that will bring the internet, tele-medicine, educational services and economic development tools to even the most remote areas.

Second, development banks, NGO's and private foundations will likely become more creative in developing solutions to the problems of financing these important

improvements in areas where they might not otherwise be viable from a short-term business point of view.

These two key policy changes can serve as the catalysis for the private sector to step in and create true government-private sector partnerships.

We at ICS Group feel that the most important factor driving these profound changes is political. With more and more countries becoming democracies the leaders have determined that to be elected and re-elected they must appeal to the more rural voter as well as the urban voters. The best way to deliver the necessary services and benefits to the more rural areas is through technology.

To help meet these needs, ICS Group has developed its ICS Community Empowerment -- Communications And Power Stations (ICECAPS). Working with other corporations, educational institutions, and NGO-AID organizations ICECAPS was developed.

ICECAPS can provide a community with electricity through a micro-grid system. The system uses a combination of conventional diesel or gas generator together with renewable energy sources such as solar, mini hydro, fuel cells or biomass to charge a battery center, which provides a constant supply of steady electricity to the community twenty four hours a day.

Pre-paid electric card meters, excellent software and remote monitoring of the units help keep the cost down. Thus, ICECAPS can provide the average house with four lights, a TV and a ceiling fan for less than \$15 USD per month. This is what many already spend for kerosene and candles.

The ICECAPS communications center (most of which was developed by the LINCOS Foundation with assistance from the MIT Media Lab, Hewlett-Packard and others) can provide to the community Internet services, tele-medicine, entertainment, educational services, E-commerce, business services, micro-credit and wireless phones. Business plans and training packages are being developed to enable members of a community to use the communications center to support more than 26 new business concepts in the communities served.

ICECAPS is not the only solution. We hope other private sector companies take up the challenge. There is more than enough market for all companies interested, with over two billion people not served at all and at least another two billion who are under served.

Let us seize the moment and take up the challenge of our world leaders to use the technology available to empower the people of the world. With over five trillion dollars invested in global mutual funds there are plenty of investors ready to provide investment that can enable the newly empowered companies to move up the ladder of development once the basic tools of development (electricity and communications) have been put in place.

These investors know that a rising tide lifts all boats.

With sustainable energy, better health care, and good jobs for all through economic development and education we will have truly met the challenge presented to us by the leaders of the World at the dawn of the new Millennium.

Thank you for the opportunity to be a small part of this very important program.

Respectfully submitted,

Mark W. Grobmyer  
Chairman